

MED. LIBRARY

RED HOUSE,
CROOK,

4th May, 1926.

To the Chairman & Members of Crook U.D.C.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit to you (in conjunction with Mr. AYTON, Surveyor) my report for the year ending 31st December, 1925.

AREA.

The Urban District of Crook comprises an area of 4,058 acres, consisting of the whole of the Township of Crook and Billy Row, which includes colliery villages, Sunnyside, near Tow Law, and from there to Deerness Valley.

POPULATION.

The estimated population for the year is 13,310.

PHYSICAL FEATURES AND GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE AREA.

The Urban Area of Crook is situated in a very hilly district, and the people therein are chiefly engaged in Mining and Agriculture. The area during the last five years, to the best of my knowledge (this being only my second year of office), has not been materially altered. It attains the highest altitude in the county, and Stanley Farm, on the extreme N.E. boundary, is recognised as the highest farm under cultivation in England. Since the year 1921 the area has suffered considerably through the coal depression and is still suffering from the same cause, and the outlook at the present time is gloomier than ever. There have been considerable improvements made in the immediate neighbourhood of Crook on the recreative side: new Bowling Greens, etc. having been made upon the waste land beside Messrs. Pease & Partners Bankfoot Works which will help to improve the general health of the community. The town itself has been considerably improved in many ways, especially in the addition of Electric Lighting and Power. The biggest defect is the narrowness of Hope Street, the main street of the town, on account of the increased motor traffic passing through it. The town is well supplied with up-to-date shops which cater for the public very reasonably. As for places of amusement we have now two up-to-date Picture Halls and a Theatre which cater for the public social side at a very reasonable rate. Last, but not the least important, the religious and moral side is well looked after by the two Churches of England and the other places of worship.

NUMBER OF INHABITED HOUSES.

The number of inhabited houses in 1921 was 2,633, and in 1925 the number was 2,798, being an increase of 165 houses. The number of families or separate occupiers thereof in 1921 was 2,694, whilst in 1925 the number rose to 3,000, being an increase of 306, which shows that there is still a great dearth of houses in the district. Overcrowding is still prevalent, but to obviate this the Council have already under consideration the building of 100 more houses.

RATEABLE VALUE.

The rateable value of the district is £49,000, and this sum, represented by a 1d. rate, yields £170.

VITAL STATISTICS.

During the year there were notified 287 Births—158 Males and 129 Females. Of these 9 Males and 4 Females were illegitimate—the Birth Rate working out to 21·5 per 1,000 of the population. The total number of Deaths from all causes was 132, viz.: 80 Males and 52 Females, giving a Death Rate of 9·9 per 1,000 of the population. The causes of the Deaths were as follows :—

Causes of Death.	Male.	Female.
Measles	1	0
Whooping Cough	2	1
Diphtheria	2	1
Influenza	1	1
Tuberculosis of Respiratory System	7	6
Other Tubercular Diseases	2	1
Cancer—Malignant Disease	5	3
Rheumatic Fever	1	0
Diabetes	1	1
Cerebral Hemorrhage, etc.	7	2
Heart Disease	4	5
Arterio-Sclerosis	9	7
Bronchitis	2	1
Pneumonia (all forms)	8	7
Other Respiratory Diseases	1	1
Ulcer of Stomach or Duodenum	0	1
Diarrhoea, etc. (under 2 years)	1	0
Acute and Chronic Nephritis	3	3
Puerperal Sepsis	0	1
Congenital Debility and Malformation, Premature Birth	6	4
Suicide	1	0
Other deaths from violence	4	0
Other defined Diseases	11	6
Causes ill-defined or unknown	1	0
	80	52

The main causes of Sickness or Infectious Diseases have been due to either overcrowding or temporary defects in drainage, which according to the statistics of 1925, show a decided improvement, as in that year we have decidedly the smallest number of notifications in the five years under consideration. The authority are to be congratulated on that return, more especially considering we had an outbreak of Smallpox in May, 1925, which, owing to the immediate removal of infected patients, the vaccination of all contacts, the thorough disinfection of all the houses infected, and the destruction of bedding and other garments, the outbreak was limited to "three" cases.

HOSPITALS provided or subsidised by the Local Authority or by the County Council.

There are no Hospitals in the Urban Area, but nevertheless it is well served by the numerous Tuberculosis Institutions throughout the County, one Sanatorium being at Helmington Row, which is only 1 mile away. Wolsingham and Stanhope are also quite close. There is also a Maternity Home at Bishop Auckland, which is about 6 miles away. There is a Fever Hospital at Helmington Row, and a Smallpox Hospital at Binchester, carried on by the Auckland, Shildon, and Willington Joint Hospital Board, of which this area is represented on the Board, and is also a contributing party. As regards other cases, the patients of the district have free access to the Lady Eden Hospital, Bishop Auckland; Durham County Infirmary, and the Infirmary in Newcastle-on-Tyne, and also to the Special Ear, Eye, and Throat Institutions at Newcastle. These benefits are granted owing to the numerous public subscriptions from the district, and weekly subscriptions from the workmen.

AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

There are Ambulance Vans connected with the various Infectious Hospitals always on duty, and the Durham County Council Van always attends to the removal of the Tubercular patients, to and from the various Institutions. Messrs. Pease and Partners, who own practically all the collieries in the district, have a private van for the needs of their own workmen. As we have two up-to-date Garages in the town, besides numerous comfortable motors plying for hire, there has never been any difficulty in getting a patient removed to any of the Institutions.

CLINICS AND TREATMENT CENTRES.

We have an up-to-date Child Welfare Centre and School Clinic at Crook, which is regularly attended, and has proved itself to be of vital importance in the up-bringing of young children.

Tuberculosis and Venereal Diseases, prior to going into any Institution, are treated at the County Dispensary at Bishop Auckland.

PUBLIC OFFICERS OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY.

Robert Steel, Medical Officer of Health	} Part time Officials.
John G. Warnock, Deputy M.O.H.	
Ernest W. Ayton, Sanitary Surveyor and Inspector	} Full time Officials.
William H. Harvey, Clerk	
William A. Burnip, Rate Collector	
William Dowson, House Agent	
John S. Forster, Electrical Engineer	

PROFESSIONAL NURSING IN THE HOME.

The district is well supplied with qualified Nurses under the Queen Victoria Nursing Association for the County, four being at present on the staff.

MIDWIVES.

The authority employ no midwives, but there are at present five certificated midwives practising in the area, who are under the County Authority.

CHEMICAL WORK.

Under this heading anything materially arising in connection with the adulteration of food, is dealt with by the County Analyst. As for the Inspection of Throat Swabs and Sputum, the same are sent to the Bacteriological Department, Durham University College of Medicine, Newcastle-on-Tyne. Diphtheria Antitoxin provided by Local Authority and Hospital Board.

LEGISLATION IN FORCE.

CROOK URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

List of Adoptive Acts, Bye Laws, &c.

Public Health Acts (Amendment Act, 1890), Part 4	4th May, 1920
Private Street Works Acts, 1892	2nd Jan., 1906
Public Health Acts (Amendment Act, 1907)	
Bye-Laws—Cleansing of Footways and Pavements	7th May, 1901
Nuisances	7th May, 1901
Common Lodging Houses	7th May, 1901
New Streets and Buildings	7th May, 1901
Slaughter Houses	7th May, 1901
Hackney Carriages	7th May, 1901
Houses let in lodgings, or occupied by } members of more than one family }	6th May, 1901
Offensive Trades	7th May, 1901
Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops ...	1st Aug., 1899

WATER SUPPLY.

The district is satisfactorily supplied by the Durham County Water Board, perhaps with the exception of the small village of Stanley Colliery, containing about 50 houses, where the mains are defective, and the supply intermittent. This matter, however, is receiving attention.

RIVERS and STREAMS.

The only river in the immediate vicinity is the River Wear, which at no part touches the Urban Area. There is the Crook Beck which flows from Sunnyside, direct through Crook, which has been a bone of contention for years owing to the serious pollution from the Bankfoot Works of Messrs. Pease & Partners, and empties itself into the River Wear near Witton Park.

DRAINAGE and SEWERAGE.

The whole of the Sewerage of the district, with the exception of the small amount from Stanley Colliery Village, is conveyed to the disposal works, which are situate in the Auckland Rural District, and are administered by a joint board comprised of Members of the Crook U.D.C. and the Auckland R.D.C. About three-fourths of the Sewage treated at these works comes from the Crook District. The works consist of a large irrigation farm, about 45 acres in extent, the soil being light and sandy and most suitable for the purification of Sewage.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

Water closets are now provided in all new houses, and in all conversions water closets are substituted. During the year twenty-six have been substituted in place of ashpit privies, and ten extra provided where two families were using the same closet.

Closets of each type.		1921		1925	
Water Closets		336	...	664	...
Ash Closets		1885	...	1851	...
Ashpit Privies		67	...	35	...

SCAVENGING.

With the exception of part of High Hope Street and West Road the whole of the house refuse in Crook is removed by the Council's own horses and carts. Billy Row, Grahamsley, White Lea and Mount Pleasant Districts are covered by the Council's Motor Wagons. Roddymoor, Stanley Colliery, Sunnyside and outlying districts are let to farmers who deposit the refuse on to their land. Refuse Tips are provided by the Council at West Roddymoor, White Lea and Stanley. All carts have to be provided with suitable canvas covers, and all ashpits, ashclosets, etc., to be cleansed at least once every week. On the whole the work is satisfactory, in no instance during the year has it been necessary to enforce the penal clause under the terms of the contract.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA.

Every house of the working-class type has been visited during the year with a view to preparing a statement showing the extent of overcrowding. Every house from which cases of infectious disease has been notified has been inspected.

NOTICES.

		No. of informal written Notices by Inspector.		No. of Notices by order of Authority.		No. of Nuisances abated after Notice.	
Dwelling Houses—Structural Defects		3	...	1	...	1	
„ Overcrowding	...	1	...	0	...	1	
Cowsheds		2	...	0	...	2	
Bakehouses		1	...	0	...	1	
Slaughter Houses		2	...	0	...	2	
Water Closets		3	...	0	...	3	
Defective Yards		2	...	1	...	2	
Drainage—Defective Traps	...	8	...	0	...	8	
„ Other Faults	...	2	...	0	...	2	
Water Supply		1	...	0	...	1	
		25		2		23	

SMOKE ABATEMENT.

There is only the Leather Factory and Messrs. Pease and Partners Bankfoot Works, both of which are provided with chimneys sufficiently high to carry the smoke well over the tops of the surrounding houses.

SCHOOLS.

There are four large Council Schools in the area, which are all substantially built of stone, except the Infant Department at Peases West, which is built on the bungalow system, of corrugated iron sheeting. The schools are all well lighted and ventilated, and have a perfect supply of water. They are also well equipped with lavatories and urinals, and are under the supervision of the Durham County Council.

HOUSING.

During the past twenty years there has been a very small increase in population, and consequently houses of a modern description are relatively scarce. Since 1921 the Council have erected and occupied, under the Housing Acts, 228 houses. During that period 40 have been erected by private enterprise. To set against this 12 houses at Stanley Village have been so damaged by colliery workings which necessitated the closing of the same. The total number of occupied houses at the end of 1925 was 2889.

The Council have a scheme under consideration for the erection of a further 200 houses. There is undoubtedly a shortage of houses in the area, and on the basis of two persons to one room, there are 292 houses overcrowded, and 115 families living double.

Generally speaking, the number of markedly defective houses in the area is comparatively small. At Roddymoor, Grahamsley, Mount Pleasant, and in connection with colliery property generally, the roads are situated between the houses and the conveniences. This is an objection which the Council is endeavouring to remedy. At Roddymoor a new road is being provided outside the conveniences, and water closets are to be provided in place of the existing ashpit privies.

The chief difficulty in remedying defects is the shortage of money. The Colliery Owners, who are the largest owners of property in the area, are very reluctant to undertake any improvement schemes, other than ordinary repairs, owing at present to the unsettled condition of the coal trade, and also the coal life of the district. Private owners of working class dwellings, are in a similar position, due perhaps to arrears of rent, and many experience the greatest difficulty in paying the District and Poor Rates.

HOUSING STATISTICS for the year 1925 :—

Number of new houses erected during the year	...	...	...	2
With state assistance : 1. By Local Authority	...	...	...	nil
2. By other bodies or persons	...	...	...	nil
Unfit dwelling houses inspected under the Public Health Act for housing defects	...	...	...	nil
Number of dwelling houses inspected under the Housing Regulations 1910	...	...	...	nil
Number found to be unfit for habitation	...	...	...	nil
Number found not to be in all respects fit for habitation	...	...	...	nil
Dwelling houses rendered fit with formal notices being served	...	...	...	nil
Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	...	...	...	nil
Number of dwelling houses remedied under Public Health Act :—				
1. By owners	...	...	...	nil
2. By Local Authority in default of owners	...	...	...	nil
Number of dwelling houses in respect of which closing orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owners of intention to close	...	...	...	nil

Proceedings under Public Health Acts :—

1. Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defect to be remedied	...	...	28
2. Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied after formal notice :—			
1. By owners	...	...	13
2. By Local Authority in default of owners	...	...	nil
Proceedings under Sections 11, 14 and 15 of Housing Act, 1925	...	...	nil

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

MILK SUPPLY.

The whole of the cowsheds in the area have been examined. The byres at Red Barns Farm have been improved, the floors repaired, and extra light and ventilation provided. Nothing has been done at Stanley Farm where the the byres are unfit. Milk is not now produced at this place.

On the register there are 33 milk producers.

MEAT.

All slaughter houses in the district have been examined. One at Mount Pleasant has been repaired ; and one at High Hope Street, Crook, is at the moment receiving attention. Meat at the butchers' shops and the stalls in the Market Place are frequently examined. Butchers notify weekly times of slaughtering for the purposes of inspection. In no case was it necessary to condemn meat.

	1920	Jan. 1925	Dec. 1925
Registered	14	15	15
Licensed	14	15	15

BAKEHOUSES.

There are only two bakehouses, but in connection with small shops bread and teacakes are prepared for sale. No action was necessary during the year.

Prevalence of, and Control over, INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Having only been Medical Officer for the last two years, I can only say that every scientific and ordinary medical recognition has been carried out in the district to control and cope with all infectious diseases during my time. As there is a Public Health Vaccinator in the district the vaccinations and re-vaccinations, with few exceptions, have been passed on to him, and thoroughly complied with.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES (other than Tuberculosis) during the year 1925.

Disease	Total Cases Notified	Cases Admitted to Hospital	Total Deaths
Smallpox	3	3	Nil
Scarlet Fever	37	35	Nil
Diphtheria	20	19	Nil
Enteric Fever	Nil	Nil	Nil
Encephalitis Lethargica	3	3	Nil
Ophthalmia Neonotorum	4	1	Nil
Chickenpox	12	Nil	Nil
Erysipelis	3	Nil	Nil
	82	61	—

Cases of, and Ages at Death during the last 5 Years.

Year	Under 1 Year	1 to 5	5 to 15	15 to 25	25 to 65	65 and over
1921 ...	32	18	6	5	30	38
1922 ...	18	12	6	3	45	54
1923 ...	10	10	5	4	41	57
1924 ...	30	9	4	3	42	49
1925 ...	26	6	2	5	39	37

TUBERCULOSIS.—New Cases and Mortality during 1925.

Age Periods	New Cases				Deaths			
	Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
2 ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1 ...	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5 ...	1	—	2	1	—	—	—	—
10 ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
15 ...	—	—	2	—	—	—	1	—
20 ...	1	1	—	—	—	2	—	—
25 ...	—	2	1	1	2	1	—	—
35 ...	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
45 ...	—	2	1	—	1	—	—	—
55 ...	2	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
65 and upwards ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals ..	8	5	7	2	3	3	1	—

Deaths and Ages of Cases died in 1925 but Notified in 1924.

Age 42 ...	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	—
„ 45 ...	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	—
„ 21 ...	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
„ 66 ...	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
	2	2	—	—	2	2	—	—

PUBLIC HEALTH REGULATIONS—Prevention of Tuberculosis 1925

Immediately on notification of tuberculosis cases, the same is reported at once to the County Medical Officer, and they are then put on the list of Dr. Macrae, the central Tuberculosis Medical Officer for the county, who, with his assistants and health visitors, visit the patients at their own home, and either recommend domiciliary dispensary or sanatorium treatment. The nearest dispensary to Crook is that at Bishop Auckland, six miles away, and the majority of patients who are able to travel, avail themselves freely of the treatment, and unquestionably derive considerable benefit.

Although we have numerous Sanatoria Tuberculosis Hospitals in the county, there is still great room for a further increase of such institutions, but under the existing depressing conditions of trade in the county it is very difficult to obtain finances to increase the accommodation. Although the houses in many instances, where patients are compelled to remain at home, are anything but satisfactory, I have no hesitation in saying that they get the best of medical attention under the circumstances.

The following are Tuberculosis Hospitals in the county :—

Helmington Row (within 1 mile of Crook)	...	...	No. of Beds	14
Tindale Crescent „ 6 „	...	...	„ „	12
Stannington Chrn. Sanatorium	...	...	„ „	90
Barrasford Sanatorium	...	...	„ „	4
Blencathra	...	...	„ „	9
Sunderland	...	...	„ „	25
Hollywood Hall, Wolsingham (within 6 miles of Crook)	„	„	„ „	206
Leazes House, Wolsingham (women)	...	...	„ „	12

Taking everything into consideration, the various statistics show a marked improvement in public health in the district, and as soon as we have more houses then less overcrowding must necessarily follow, and thus help to mitigate the onset and spreading of all infectious diseases, more especially Tuberculosis.

Again thanking the Chairman and Members for their kindness during the year, and also Mr. Ayton for his kind help and co-operation.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

Robert Steel,

M. O. H.

